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Title: Need to develop new R & D technique to preserve the corneas for a longer period of time.

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA (AMBALA): Madam, I would like to bring to the kind notice of the hon. Health Minister that more than 5 million people are suffering with corneal blindness in India and every year 30,000 new patients are added to this number. At least, two lakh cornea donations are needed annually but only about 50,000 such procedures take place due to paucity of donors. Change in the technique of removing the eye from a donor body is a commendable job which has been performed by AIIMS, PGIs and various other hospitals of the country.

13.00 hrs

Earlier, most families would reject the possibility of donating the eyes of their relatives citing disfigurement of the body as the reason. But due to awareness and new techniques since 2011, only the corneal disc is removed to keep the overall appearance of the body intact and they do not take out the entire eyes. But alas, preservation of the donated tissues has become another key problem. Due to this problem, nearly 30 per cent of the eyes donated go waste as either the tissue gets damaged or infected or the recipient is not available immediately.

Therefore, I demand that a new R&D technique may be developed to preserve the corneas for a longer period of time at a low cost as compared to the imported ones. In spite of religious feelings of disfigurement of the body, relatives of some people have come forward for donating the eyes of their relatives for a good cause.

I, therefore, request that these efforts must not go futile so that more people may come for donating their eyes.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Bhairon Prasad Mishra is permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Rattan Lal Kataria.